

1. Describe the practice proposed for recognition, and list its objectives. Detail how the practice is innovative and how it promotes high student achievement.

The practice being proposed for recognition is a Cross-Age Reading Experience (C.A.R.E.) pairing basic skills high school juniors with transitional first-graders and basic skills elementary school students for reading instruction. Once a week approximately fifteen juniors walk to the elementary school to work with first, third and fourth grade students on their reading and writing skills. These juniors spend their free time writing lesson plans, creating prereading material as well as activities, and reflecting in journals based on their experiences with the elementary school students.

- Objectives:**
1. The high school students will be able to improve their attitude towards language arts literacy through individualized instruction with elementary school students.
 2. Through a cross-age reading experience, elementary and high students will increase their reading and writing skills.
 3. This program enables the high school students to view themselves as learners and become aware of their metacognitive skills.
 4. To create a positive attitude and raise the self-esteem of the students so they may become life-long readers and learners.

“In the past month, I have learned a lot of new things about myself. Working with the children not only helped them, but, in my opinion, helped the high school students with vocabulary, reading, oral interpretation, and self-confidence.....”

“....reading with the kids makes me more confident with my English skills. Teaching someone the skills I know and working on vocabulary words, was a highlight of this program. Teaching them to sound-out the word, helping them pronounce the word, and teaching the meanings helps their vocabulary increase in size. It also made me aware of the skills I use when I read.”

This excerpt from an at-risk junior’s English class journal beautifully details the innovation of this practice. Many low level students do not value reading as an important part of their lives. They are apathetic, unmotivated, and, sometimes, easily angered by the reading assignments received in their English, Science, and History classes. Through the partnership with the elementary school, basic skill high school students begin to see their role of tutor as an important one. This program provides authentic reasons for learning and a desire to share what they know with others. This type of learning for both students encourages them to internalize those concepts that present difficulty, an idea that has been researched throughout the reading community. The same rings true for the elementary school students. Both high school and elementary school students experience an increase in self-esteem, confidence, and cognitive skills that normally prevent them from improving as students. Both begin to recognize the need to connect the skills and strategies to real-life contexts.

2. List the specific *Core Curriculum Content Standards, including the Cross-Content Workplace Readiness Standards*, addressed by the practice and describe how the practice addresses those standards(s). Provide an example to substantiate your response.

Cross-Content Workplace Readiness Standards:

Standard 2: All students will use information, technology and other tools. High School and elementary school students participating in C.A.R.E. have accessed technology-based materials through keyboarding, troubleshooting, and retrieving and managing information. They are currently completing a project that allows them to assess information on specific topics using both computer and print resources available in the media center. They will also use technology to present their information at a future tutoring session.

Standard 3: All students will use critical thinking, decision making, and problem-solving skills.

Each week all high school students are required to reflect and define their current lesson plan for the elementary school students. Through organization, synthesizing and evaluating their observations of the prior lesson, these student identify patterns of learning and evaluate possible alternative solutions. At the end of each tutoring session, both levels of students complete a journal entry that evaluates and analyze the effectiveness of that particular session.

Standard 4: All students demonstrate self-management skills.

A number of the high school students rearrange their daily schedule to accommodate their tutee's schedule. For example, lunches and activity periods are missed and then made up so these students can collaborate with one another in the planning process of their lessons. Each student is open to the other's constructive criticism when role playing their ideas. Their use of time is effective and efficient.

Language Arts Literacy Standards:

This cross-age reading program addresses all five literacy standards. Both high school and elementary school students speak within small and large groups. Through oral communication between peers, tutors, tutees, and teachers, both students read aloud with meaning and work on retelling and summarizing. While engaged in the tutoring sessions, both tutor and tutee must demonstrate active listening. Appropriate feedback is given to both students while relevant questions, prediction making, and journal writing is addressed. Throughout this project, many writing assignments have been addressed. These assignments range from, but are not limited to, journal writing, brainstorming, writing college applications, and incorporating figurative language into the weekly lessons. The reading materials used throughout these session range from fiction to non-fiction. Through listening, speaking, writing and viewing, elementary and secondary school students identify the many purposes for reading. Nontextual information is included in this ongoing project through researching the Internet, using photographs to make predictions, and creating diagrams to retell reading passages.

3. Describe the educational needs of students that the practice addresses. Document the assessment measures used to determine the extent to which the objectives of the practice have been met. Provide assessments and data to show how the practice met these needs.

Educational Needs and Assessments

This practice addresses three needs of the high school students. First, C.A.R.E. allows these students to identify their metacognitive skills. Discussing the thinking process is crucial to improving reading ability. Secondly, this program addresses the need for these students to improve their attitude towards language arts literacy and school in general. Finally, there is a definite need for basic skills high school students to improve their overall self-esteem.

Concurrently, affective and cognitive needs of elementary school students are addressed. Reading skills ranging from fluency, word recognition, and comprehension are all addressed throughout this program. These students' attitude towards their ability to read and write is also addressed.

Assessment measures for High School Students

- Pre- and post-reading attitude and interest inventory
- Pre- and post-metacognitive awareness attitude
- Attendance records
- Journal writing
- Teacher observation

Assessment measure for Elementary Students

- Reading Interest inventory
- QRI-II: Informal reading Inventories
- Teacher Observation

Data

After administering a pre- and post-reading attitude and interest inventory, eight of the fifteen high school students believed that tutoring would help them become a better reader. As a result of this 66% increase from the pre-inventory assessment, these juniors were observed taking risks within their own reading and writing assignments. Attendance for several of these students improved by 80%. One student, in particular, began to attend class regularly and even rescheduled his out-of-school suspension so it did not conflict with his preparation and tutoring sessions. Journal writing addressed specific metacognitive skills. Most high school students wrote introspectively, citing how it must feel to try to reach out to someone who is not interested and how creative they had to be to work with students.

Assessment measurements for the elementary school students indicated an increase in taking risks, reading with fluency, and writing for a specific purpose. The students' confidence level increased as well as their interest to prepare to read well for their tutors.

4. Describe how you would replicate the practice in another school and/or district.

Replicating the practice

- 1, Send a letter to the building principal asking for:
 - Approval to take an English/Reading class to an elementary school to share readings.
 - Approval to ask an elementary school administrator to facilitate this project.
 - (If needed) arrange transportation to and from elementary school.
 - Arrange coverage for any other classes on the afternoon of the project.
2. After receiving approval from building principal:
 - Contact elementary school principal and ask for permission to facilitate program.
 - Receive recommendation of an elementary school class and the name of teacher to contact.
 - Decide on a mutually agreeable date and time to discuss project.
 - Send home a letter to all parents with a permission slip covering participation in the program and transportation.
3. Begin instructing high school students:
 - Have students complete a reading attitude inventory.
 - Explain general projects and have students create project goals.
 - Model and practice reading children's books.
 - Show clips of TV program Reading Rainbow, Sesame Street. Have students create a guideline for oral reading.
 - Model questioning techniques and have students create a list of possible questions for elementary students.
 - Have students choose two children's books to read to the elementary school students.
 - Model and create lesson plans.
 - Role-play with students. Some pretend to be elementary school students while the other student acts as tutor. Discuss potential problems and solutions.
 - Tutor
 - Complete Post-Reading Inventory and journal entry regarding experience.